

**Wally
Herger**
Congressman

2nd District - California



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 22, 2005

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Herger Commends Committee's Passage of Endangered Species Act (ESA) Reform Bill

Legislation includes Herger-backed "human health and safety" provision

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02) today praised the Resources Committee's passage of H.R. 3824, the Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005. The reform bill tightens requirements for scientific decision-making and emphasizes proactive efforts to help species recover. It also includes a provision that would require the Secretary of the Interior to develop regulations that could waive or streamline the ESA when human health, safety or property is threatened. This provision was modeled after Congressman Herger's H.R. 2779, the Species Rescue Act, which was initially introduced after the tragic levee break that occurred in Arboga, south of Marysville, CA, in January 1997, and has been re-introduced in subsequent sessions of Congress.

"I applaud Chairman Pombo and my colleagues on the Committee for passing much-needed legislation to update the ESA," Herger said. "The inclusion of a 'human health and safety' provision is a common sense change to existing law and is incredibly important for Northern California."

Congressman Herger's 'Species Rescue Act' would streamline the ESA to allow targeted, emergency levee repair work to occur before disaster strikes. The 'human health and safety' provision in the bill adopted by the Committee today takes a similar approach by mandating that the Interior department develop guidelines that could allow for an expedited environmental review process for actions necessary to address threats, such as catastrophic flooding, to human life or property.

"Our Northern California congressional district has been 'ground zero' for many tragic events resulting from an outdated and inflexible ESA, including the Arboga levee break and the Klamath Basin water shut-off of 2001. Although the ESA is well intentioned, it has long been a tool to stop flood protection improvements and halt restoration forestry in our National Forests," concluded Herger.

H.R. 3824 is likely to receive floor consideration in the House next week. It is expected to pass in the House, though prospects for Senate consideration and passage are unclear.

For more information, log on to <http://www.house.gov/herger> on the Internet!